

THE GYM INDUSTRY

Market Overview

The global fitness and gym industry has established itself as a resilient and steadily expanding sector within the broader health and wellness economy. At this moment, the market is valued at approximately USD 262.4 billion, with projections indicating growth to USD 412.0 billion by 2033, representing a compound annual growth rate of 5.8% [1]. This trajectory reflects both the recovery from pandemic related disruptions and the structural drivers of long-term demand, including rising health awareness, urbanization, and the integration of digital fitness solutions.

From a regional perspective, North America remains to be the largest market, supported by high gym membership rates, strong consumer spending power, and the presence of major publicly listed operators. Europe represents a mature but stable market, characterized by high density of health clubs and a strong culture of fitness participation, though growth rates are comparatively modest.

By contrast, Asia-Pacific is the fastest-growing region, with emerging markets expected to significantly expand the global customer base over the next decade

Key Macroeconomic Drivers

The performance and growth of the gym and fitness industry are strongly influenced by several macroeconomic drivers. Income and GDP growth play a key role, as higher disposable income encourages consumers to invest more in health and wellness services. In periods of economic expansion, demand for gym memberships and personal training tends to rise, while periods of high inflation or stagnation can reduce spending, especially in premium segments. Demographic trends are also central: younger generations such as Millennials and Gen Z place high value on physical fitness, mental health,



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and lifestyle experiences, boosting demand for both gym memberships and digital fitness platforms. Simultaneously, the aging population in many developed markets is driving demand for rehabilitation-focused and low-impact training programs.

Another important factor is healthcare economics. As healthcare costs rise globally, preventive health behaviors like exercise are becoming more integrated into healthcare and insurance strategies. Employers and insurance providers increasingly offer fitness benefits or subsidized memberships, which helps stabilize demand and supports long-term sector growth.

The industry is also being reshaped by technological adoption, including the widespread use of wearables, fitness apps, AI-guided training, and hybrid gym models that combine in-person and digital experiences. These technologies enhance personalization and engagement while providing gyms with flexible, scalable revenue streams that make the sector more resilient to external disruptions such as pandemics.

Finally, government policy and public health promotion are reinforcing industry growth. Many governments are recognizing the importance of physical activity in preventing chronic disease and improving population-wide well-being. Policies such as tax incentives for wellness programs, public-private partnerships, and national campaigns to promote physical activity are encouraging broader participation in fitness services. Together, these drivers support the integration of gyms and fitness solutions into larger healthcare and sustainability frameworks, strengthening the sector's outlook in both mature and emerging markets.

Rising Health Awareness

Regular exercise has now a major role in disease prevention, with studies showing that physical activity reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and mental-health conditions.

Urban gym culture has become especially prominent as city dwellers are more informed about good health habits, shifting an occasional gym day to a permanent routine.

This normalized behaviour in modern urban living is reflected in rising gym use, with some health-club operators reporting up to a 25% year-on-year increase in facility foot traffic, underscoring that gym visits have become a routine part of many city dwellers' lifestyles.

Industry trends

The fitness market is divided into three primary segments.

Traditional gyms and fitness centers constitute the largest segment by revenue, consisting of full-service health clubs and big-box gyms that offer broad facilities and high membership volumes at mid-range prices.

Boutique fitness studios represent a specialized segment focused on class-based experiences such as cycling, yoga, Pilates, and HIIT, and currently account for approximately half of all U.S. gym memberships. Digital and virtual fitness platforms, which include streaming workout classes, fitness apps, and connected home equipment, experienced significant growth during the pandemic and continue to expand as hybrid models gain traction.

Beyond traditional gym operations, the fitness industry is supported by an extended ecosystem of interconnected sectors. These include fitness apparel, encompassing athletic wear and athleisure brands; fitness equipment manufacturers, which produce both home and commercial gym equipment; wearable fitness technology, such as smartwatches, fitness trackers, and health monitoring devices; and sports nutrition and supplements, including protein powders, pre-workouts, and performance nutrition products.

Within this segmented landscape, several structural trends are reshaping how fitness services are delivered and consumed.

Going to the gym is becoming an increasingly popular choice, with global gym memberships having grown by around 7.8% in recent years. Generation Z is the main contributor to this expansion, making gym-going a widely adopted lifestyle decision among younger consumers. This growth is reinforced by the high volume of fitness-related content on social media, where exercise, physique, and wellness are among the most frequently shared themes, amplifying the visibility and social appeal of gym participation.

The rise of low-cost gyms is one of the most prominent structural trends in the sector. Some of the companies that have capitalized on the low-cost model include Planet Fitness, Basic-Fit, PureGym, and Vivagym, offering simplified services at affordable prices within a high-volume framework. In the United Kingdom, a 2023 PwC study estimated that the market could sustain between 1,300 and 1,650 low-cost gyms in total, compared with 756 operating at the time [2], indicating substantial room for further penetration of this format.

This business model is attractive to users because it is cheaper, often provides access to multiple locations within the same network, and in some cases offers extended or near 24/7 opening hours. It is also appealing for operators, who can expect profit margins in the range of roughly 10–25% (depending on efficiency), compared with around 10–15% for traditional full-service gyms [3]. Additionally, several operators employ franchise models, which enable faster geographic expansion with lower capital requirements and shared operational risk.

Digital solutions are reshaping the traditional gym model into a hybrid ecosystem that combines physical and virtual training. Training apps and virtual classes enable users to complement in-person workouts with remote, on-demand sessions, increasing flexibility and engagement. At the same time, equipment providers such as Technogym are integrating

wellness services and real-time performance feedback directly into machines, while companies like Peloton offer connected devices linked to subscription-based online classes.

This evolution is shifting the industry from a focus on access to equipment toward personalized, data-driven training experiences that can be delivered both inside and outside the gym.

Risks and Constraints

The fitness and gym industry faces several structural risks that could constrain its growth and profitability despite strong underlying demand.

Economic downturns and persistent inflation remain the most significant threats, as gym memberships and personal training are discretionary expenses often reduced when disposable income declines.

High interest rates further limit new investments and expansions. Competitive saturation also poses a challenge, particularly in urban markets where numerous gyms and digital alternatives drive price pressure and raise marketing costs. The industry also struggles to keep members for long periods, which means gyms often need to spend more to attract new clients and maintain steady revenue.

Rising operating costs, especially wages, rent, and utilities, intensify these pressures, leaving smaller businesses more vulnerable. Moreover, technological disruption can quickly render traditional gyms less appealing if they fail to adapt to digital integration or emerging fitness technologies. Finally, legal obligations and health-related issues can also make the industry's environment more uncertain.

Overall, the industry's performance depends on its capacity to remain adaptable, control costs, and sustain customer engagement in a highly competitive and cyclical environment.

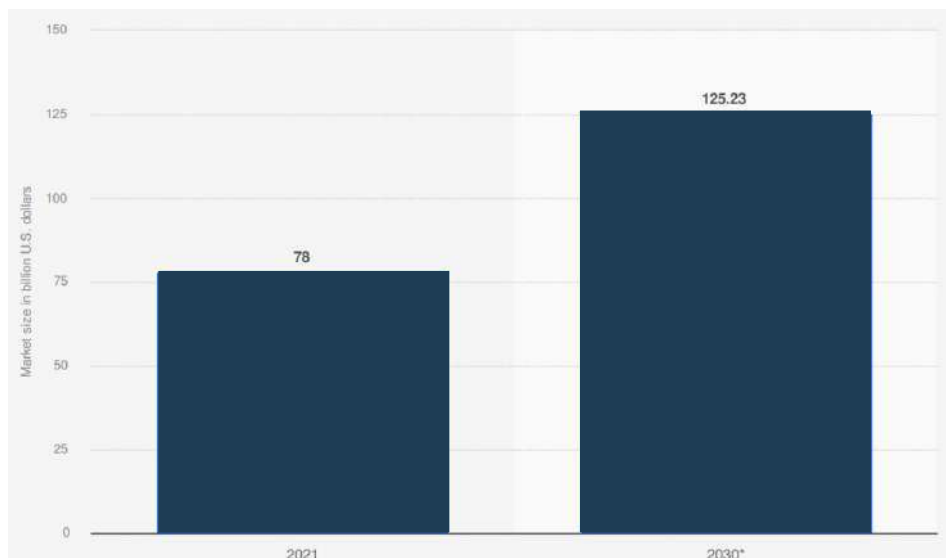


Figure 1. Size of the health and fitness club market worldwide in 2021, with a forecast for 2030. Source: Statista (2025)

References

- [1] <https://www.mmccinvest.com/post/u-s-fitness-and-gym-industry-report-2025-2030-outlook>
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